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ABSTRACT

Five speeches from a one-day workshop are concerned with book manufacture, marketing decisions, preservation of books, and binding techniques. Librarian Bonnie Jo Dopp defined terminology used in describing books and book manufacture, and mentioned the destructive action of acid in paper and the increasing use by book publishers of perfect binding methods. Roger Levenson, lecturer on the history of the book at University of California Berkeley and publisher, maintained that handsomely made books need not come from fine presses or in limited editions--well-made, attractive books are entirely possible from the trade press, even when employing computerized production techniques. Design, production, life expectancy, quality of materials, and pricing practice in book manufacture were discussed by publisher Frederick Murphy. Donald Etherington reported on activities at the Library of Congress Preservation Office and described some of Library of Congress' very sophisticated restoration techniques together with advice for small in-house operations to help and preserve materials in library collections. Susan Wilson, a Fellow of the Design Binders, briefly described several methods of binding books and outlined some of the steps in hand binding. (Author/MBR)

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WHAT IS THIS THING CALLED BOOK?

A BARC WORKSHOP ON THE TOPIC OF THE BOOK-- ITS MATERIALS, ITS MANUFACTURE, ITS CARE AND TREATMENT IN LIBRARIES, ITS REPAIR, AND A WORD ABOUT FINE PRINTING AND FINE BINDING

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION

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PROCEEDINGS OF THE WORKSHOP

HELD MARCH 24, 1978

AT THE SAN FRANCISCO DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH

Edited by Thos. S. Fowler, Workshop Coordinator

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The workshop was presented by the
Bay Area Reference Center
San Francisco Public Library
Civic Center
San Francisco, CA 94102

Gilbert W. McNamee, Director

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June 1978

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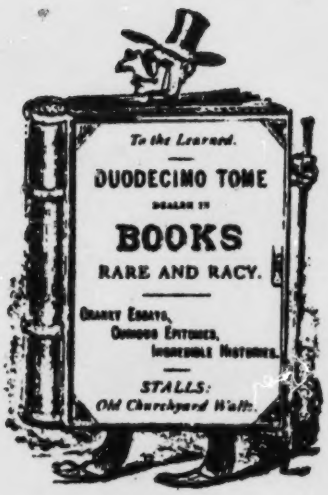

WHAT IS THIS THING CALLED BOOK?

A BARC workshop on the topic of the book--
its materials, its manufacture, its care and treatment in libraries,
its repair, and a word about fine printing and fine binding

Friday, March 24, 1978
9:30 a.m. - 3:15 p.m.

Auditorium of the San Francisco Dept. of Public Health
101 Grove St. (Civic Center), San Francisco, CA

Presented by the Bay Area Reference Center

Thos. S. Fowler, Workshop Coordinator

Schedule

9:30--9:50	The materials of the book Bonnie Jo Dopp, Bay Area Reference Center
9:50-10:40	Mea culpa Roger Levenson, Tamalpais Press
10:40-11:00	Break
11:00-11:45	The commercial decision Frederick H. Murphy, President, Holden-Day Inc.
11:45--1:15	Lunch
1:15--2:15	Conservation & preservation Donald Etherington, Library of Congress Preservation Office
2:15--2:30	Break
2:30--3:15	Binding, fine and otherwise Susan Spring Wilson, Fellow, Designer Binders
3:15--	to S.F. Museum of Modern Art

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SUMMARY

A day-long workshop titled "What is this thing called book?" was sponsored by the Bay Area Reference Center on March 24, 1978. Focused on the physical thing that is a book, workshop speakers included Roger Levenson, U.C. Berkeley lecturer on the history of the book and proprietor of Tamalpais Press; Frederick H. Murphy, president of Holden-Day Books; Donald Etherington of the Library of Congress Preservation Office; Susan Spring Wilson, a Fellow of the Designer Binders. The workshop was scheduled to coincide with the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art exhibit "Hand bookbinding today: an international art."

An introductory comment by BARC librarian Bonnie Jo Dopp began the day with a definition of terminology used in describing books and book manufacture. The destructive action of acid in paper and the increasing use by book publishers of "perfect binding" methods were mentioned.

Roger Levenson proved one of the most popular speakers with his discursive talk "Mea culpa." Handsomely made books, he maintained, need not come from fine presses nor in limited editions. Public libraries collecting "decadent" books, those of interest to collectors only, do not serve the best interests of the public in his opinion. Well-made, attractive books (we are reminded that beauty is in the eye of the beholder) are entirely possible from the trade press, even when employing computerized production techniques.

Frederick Murphy made several frank statements about design, production, life expectancy, quality of materials, and pricing practice in book manufacture. Built-in obsolescence is a fact of the American consumer's life, no less for books purchased than for stoves and refrigerators. Publishers are in business to sell books (as well as rights and permissions), and the less each book costs to manufacture, the greater the profit potential. In other words, expensive acid free paper and sewn bindings are largely things of the past. A question from the audience concerning typographical errors in printing was not strictly germane to the workshop, but Murphy's reply made clear his company's elaborate attempts to eliminate typos, but some inevitably appear. He commented that the average reading ability of the students purchasing his company's textbooks was not very high, making necessary short sentences of easily recognized words in order to sell titles. "Ripoff" was the word he used to describe the difference in prices between hardbound and paperbound editions of the same title. The actual difference in cost of manufacture is about two or three dollars.

Donald Etherington, in addition to his Preservation Office duties, is also a Fellow of the Designer Binders; an example of his work was included in the exhibit at the S.F. Museum of Modern Art. He reported on activities at the Preservation Office. Mention was made of LC's very sophisticated restoration techniques together with advice for small in-house operations that might protect and preserve materials in library collections. (Clean the stacks. Shelve by size. Control heat and humidity. Enclose delicate materials in plastic envelopes. Put fragile books in boxes made of acid free board.) He advised pressuring commercial binderies to higher standards. LC did exactly that, and not all improvements resulted in additional cost. Strongly advised is stitching through the fold of signatures, not the technique favored by most commercial binders because of the care required--and problematical as more and more books are perfect bound without signatures.

Sue Wilson described hand binding techniques. Examples of bindings in the steps of preparation were shown. A display of finely bound books was shown on slides as preparation for viewing the exhibit at the Museum of Modern Art.

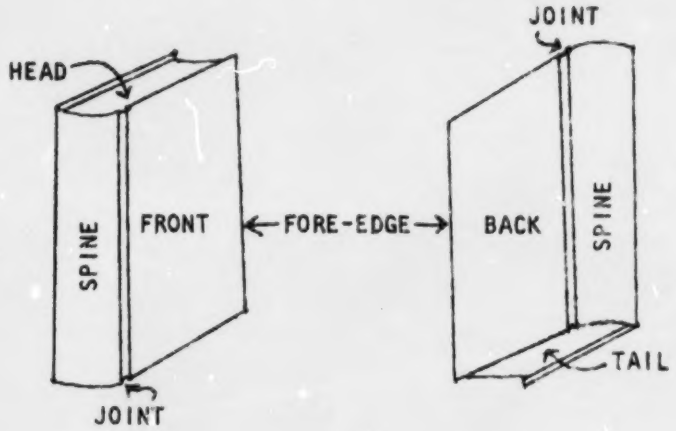
The workshop was adjourned to the museum where special arrangements for entrance to the binding exhibit had been made. About 135 persons attended the workshop.

Thos. S. Fowler

THE MATERIALS OF THE BOOK

Bonnie Jo Dopp

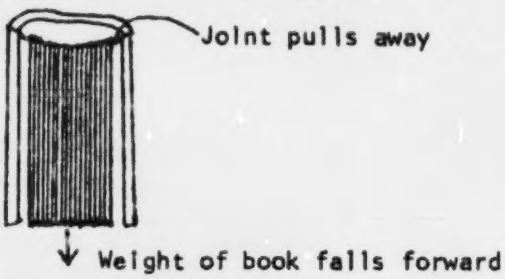
I am no expert, but I am a librarian, and I'm concerned about books; and you are all librarians concerned about books too, and I am very happy to see all of you here today. I have felt for a long time that we librarians need to look at books with a more educated eye than we have apparently been using, and I hope today that we will be learning about how to look at books in a way that will make us both more appreciative of the good that we see and more determined to change the bad. I hope that you will all take some of the things you learn today back to your colleagues: Spread the word that appreciating beautiful books is not an elitist pastime and that there are things that we can do to help books that are in trouble.



We titled this workshop "What is this thing called book?" and I want to begin today with some definitions. Books have parts to them, and we'll probably be hearing some of the terms that binders and printers use to name these parts, and I thought I'd introduce them to you.

Books are designed to sit on their tails. They are not designed to sit on their fore-edges. Setting books on their fore-edges is bad for books, especially for oversized, heavy books. The reason: It puts too great a strain on the joints of the bindings.

Let's look at a binding. It is composed of boards, endpapers, cloth (or heavy paper), and glue. A case binding is what we see most often in our libraries. The case is made separately from the book; then the book is attached to the case by means of the endpapers and a piece of cloth or heavy paper glued to the spine of the book. So the only thing holding the book in its case is a flimsy piece of cloth and a piece of paper. When the book is set on its fore-edge, the whole weight of the book falls forward, and this weight is often too great for the cloth and paper joint to bear. The joint then breaks, greatly weakening the binding.



Case bindings can be sewn and glued or simply glued. When they are sewn, they are usually in sections, or signatures, and you can often see the threads running through the center of each section. We hear a lot these days about the unsewn binding and it is often called the "glue" binding. This is a misnomer, for all but a few types of bindings such as stapled magazine bindings or Japanese bindings which have cords on the outside of the spine use some sort of adhesive. Sometimes several adhesives may be used. These fall into three general categories: paste, which is vegetable starch (and which, by the way, has proved itself for centuries as a lasting and nondamaging adhesive in books); glue, which strictly speaking is animal in origin, and which has also shown itself to be a reliable adhesive for use in books; and synthetic adhesives, most often abbreviated PVA, for "polyvinyl acetate." PVA must be

mixed with various plasticizers to make it flexible enough for use in books. (Elmer's glue is a PVA that is too stiff for books when it is dry, for example.)

Books need to be held together somehow before their cases are attached. When a book has signatures, it is sewn together and then glue or PVA is applied to the spine, so both thread and glue are holding the pages together. When a book is held together only with glue before the case is applied, the folded pages are chopped off at the spine, and we call the binding a "perfect" binding. The use of that word in this context is an atrocity in the opinion of many book lovers, for far from being in fact "perfect," these bindings are the ones that fall apart first in our libraries. I have heard Susan Wilson call them "note pad bindings," for they are basically built like note pads. When the PVA has aged somewhat (the amount of time varies with climate and storage conditions), you can just peel the pages of these books off as you would a pad of notepaper.

Bookbinders I know tell a story about phonebooks in a southwestern state a few years ago. The phonebooks were glued with what was supposed to have been a thoroughly tested and perfected synthetic adhesive. The dry, hot climate of the area was too much for the glue and soon the whole state was inundated with loose pages from phone directories flying about on desert breezes. This may be a folktale, but I know of no librarians who would find it impossible to believe, after dealing for years with books that fall apart.

Books need thread to help hold them together, but sewn bindings are becoming quite scarce and the prognosis is not good. Last December *Publisher's Weekly* predicted that even textbooks, which it called "one of the remaining bastions of the sewn binding," would soon be bound using adhesives only. Even though we are constantly being told by book manufacturers that the adhesives being used today are of more lasting quality than those of only a few years ago, we must stop to ask specifically: "How long can we really expect these bindings to last?" We may find the answer disconcerting when the binders tell us that the bindings will last as long as the books will last. What they mean when they tell us that, is that the book is only as good as the paper it is printed on.

Paper for too many books made today is not expected to last very long at all. It has far too much ground wood in it for longevity, and some of the paper that even hardback books are printed on is little better than newsprint. There is a place for the self-destruct, cheap paperback, to be sure. That place is not in our permanent library collections, however. Libraries should not have to be the repositories of dead and dying books, but until a way is found to permanently stop the acidification of paper in books, dead and dying books will be our fate. Once a book has "gone acid" it contaminates books on either side of it through a process called acid migration, so we might even say we have killer books on our shelves! Acid is formed in paper both because of wood pulp and chemicals used in making the paper, and because of the size that is used to make the paper stiff. Sizing also enables ink to sit on the surface of the paper and not penetrate the paper fibers as a blotting paper would. Chemicals can be added to paper to deacidify it once it has gone acid, or to make it acid-free to begin with. Once these buffering agents have been consumed by the constantly forming acids, however, it appears that paper with acid components will eventually be consumed by those acids.

There is material in your kits discussing acid paper and glue bindings and I urge you to read it if you are not already aware of the magnitude of the problem I am discussing here.

One article[1] asks the question: "Is there any chance the sewn binding will come back?", and answers the question with the equivalent of: "Does a chicken have lips?" Things may not be totally hopeless in the binding department, however. Dover paper-

[1]Powers, Thomas. "Will Glue Outlast Auden?", *New York Times Book Review*, 11/21/76.

backs are still sewn, and may be getting the most durable bindings around today, though in soft cover. And of course, there are fine bindings.

Public libraries cannot usually afford to buy or maintain fine books, but I want to mention at least some of the materials and processes that exemplify the best that we can expect to see in books. We can have paper made of cotton or linen rag. It is acid-free, durable, and it feels good. It may be handmade paper, which by the way, has no grain. (Machine made paper has definite grain, which makes it bend more easily one way than the other. Books must be printed on it so that the grain will run parallel to the spine of the book or the book will be hard to open.) The paper will be printed with well-designed type faces and dark black ink. The book will be bound by hand--first sewn on cords or tapes, then attached to boards of high quality by having the cords laced to the boards or the tapes slipped between split boards which are then glued together. The spine of the book will be covered in leather (goatskin is best; sheepskin tends to split as it ages) and the rest of the book covered either with leather, closely woven cloth, or beautifully marbled paper. Titles will be applied in gold leaf and any number of artistic things may be done to the front and back. Silk headbands may be sewn on, vellum tips may guard the corners, the edges of the paper may be gilt. Do books like these exist only in dreams? Not at all, though in our libraries the main contact we may have with them may be by serving patrons who collect or who make such books. There are artists of the book out there and we will be seeing a sample of some of their work this afternoon at the bookbinding exhibition at the Museum of Art. Sandra Kirshenbaum's letter to *Library Journal*, March 15, 1977, p.646, says:

> The graphic and book arts today represent a growing medium of personal literary and artistic expression among Americans, and librarians need to become aware of that trend, much as they came to recognize the protest literature of the sixties and the feminist literature of the seventies as authentic cultural phenomena worthy of analysis, preservation and access.

If only to serve these patrons, it would be well for librarians to learn more about the art of the book. But we have practical in-house concerns too, as I have pointed out, and the way books are made and the stuff of which they are made are very important matters which we cannot ignore. Ms. Kirshenbaum feels justified in saying:

> Librarians have long been criticized for not reading books. I believe they deserve equal criticism for not seeing books...and those who do not learn to do so, in one way or another, deserve every crummy...sloppily printed, shoddily bound book their budgets can afford.

She may be right. But we who are concerned about what books look like and about how books are made do not have to feel helpless. We can help to educate the book-reading public to the disasters that are befalling their own home libraries as well as the libraries their taxes support. Publishers can sell only what the public will buy and by helping to make people more aware of the problem of books that die and fall apart, we might be able to help change the situation. Librarians must be willing to form coalitions with publishers to discuss these matters. I hope the topic of book manufacture and materials is a major one at the White House Conference on Libraries and Information Services next year. Perhaps we need a law that states that book manufacturers must state what their books are made of on a colophon at the back of each book. (Colophons were once common in books, telling readers who had designed the book, what type face was being used and its designer, and other such artistic information. One sees the colophon only rarely these days.) A speech by Herbert S. Bailey reprinted in *PW* outlines many more courses of action that could be taken by librarians,

authors, publishers and paper manufacturers to improve the quality of the materials and processes used in producing the books we spend such a great amount of time selecting, processing, housing and circulating in our libraries. I recommend it to you.[2]

I have tried to introduce you to some of the terms we may be hearing today, and to create an awareness of some of the problems the materials and processes used in book manufacture today pose for all of us who buy books. I am eager to hear what other speakers say about some of these same problems, and I am sure you are too. Thank you for coming here today. Your presence indicates to me that I was right in assuming there was an interest in books among the librarians BARC serves, and makes me feel that the efforts we put into creating this workshop were well worth expending.

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[2]Bailey, Herbert S., Jr. "The Traditional Book in the Electronic Age," *Publisher's Weekly*, 12/5/77:24-29.

* * *

MEA CULPA

Roger Levenson

The first question I want to ask is, how many of you have ever had a course on the history of the book? I suspected that most of you had had some exposure, and hence the title of my talk "*Mea Culpa*," because I'm to blame, and when I say I, please--it's the editorial we who teach this subject at various places. For reasons you'll understand, I'm going to say some very unorthodox things this morning.

Let's start at the beginning of what we're talking about. I understand this is supposed to be a consciousness raising, to use the contemporary term, kind of thing. Now, in looking at the schedule that you have, may I suggest... I don't know what Mr. Murphy is going to talk about, but I could say that the subject matter here could apply to a rare books librarians convocation, such as I've attended in the past, and I hardly believe that this is your provenance, *mea culpa*.

I see in your folders you have announcements about courses and seminars coming up dealing with printing, binding, book repair and the like. I only mention these, not to plug them, but to show you all around you are the kinds of things which are stimulating people to an interest in the book, not the least librarians. One of the aspects of this is, of course, so-called fine printing. You have a notice from *Fine Print* in your folder. A former student of mine is one of the editors, and the editor is a dear friend, and I think it's a wonderful magazine. However, always in the back of my mind is the question, "How does this apply to public libraries?" I shall return to this.

First of all, the question of the term "fine printing" is what's bothering me right now. The question of fine printing is one that has troubled many people. If you look in standard dictionaries, you won't find a definition, probably, even under fine printing. It's very hard to find a definition of *l'edition deluxe*, for example, the French term for this. However, I have an approach which I'd like to read to you. Sherwood Grover, who was for 25 years the pressman of Grabhorn Press, our most famous printing office in the West, long flourishing in San Francisco, says it's very difficult to define correctly. I have yet to see the definition that suited him, though I have seen many attempts. I can tell you one thing that fine printing is not necessarily, and that is careful printing. You can look at two extremes--the telephone directory, which is a remarkable production, printed as carefully as any book can be, but I have yet to hear it called fine printing. Then across the street and way down the block you have the famous Ashendene Press, for example, an important text, one to be perpetuated with the finest of enduring handmade paper, hand composition, hand binding; but the press work sometimes lacks the "over precision" of another famous press. I feel that a definition of fine printing should include at least the approach, and I think the approach is perhaps what would best fit for all of you people in this room this morning, as well as my own self. The reason is, things have become so precious in this field and, may I suggest, expensive, that all proportion has been lost. Let me explain.

Many of you are well aware that books of this kind, commonly coming under the rubric of fine printing, are an imitation of what? Throughout the centuries, they are basically imitations of manuscripts. The margins that are on pages, the way the text is put on pages, all the other elements that go into the usual fine press book--handmade papers, the tooled bindings or other fancy printed bindings, whatever--are all included under this generalized term. Even your morning newspaper has vestiges of this every day. If you read the columns by McCabe or Delaplane you'll see the dropped initial, the capital initial that starts each paragraph, which comes from the manuscript. These traditions linger because book making has been very conservative for many, many, many years. Lawton Kennedy, the famous San Francisco printer, once wrote

that the things we find quaint or attractive in older books today are merely some problem the printer of old could not solve, and it becomes sort of a hand-me-down or tradition so that you find it being imitated widely, along with the other traditions of the manuscript that I've been talking about.

I hesitate to mention any books, but if you're not familiar with *500 Years of Printing* by Steinberg in the Pelican Books, those of you who need something cheap and quick to find out what we're talking about this morning, you will find it in print again in the 3d edition, 1974.

A book that interests me a great deal in this area is Hugh A. Williamson's *Methods of Book Design; the practice of an industrial craft*, and that describes it really. John Ryder's book has been reissued on *Printing for Pleasure*, and John Carter's classic book *ABC for Book Collectors*--this book, by the way, is actually a very witty compendium of terminology used by book collectors and dealers and librarians.

In the area of more specific things, I would just like to give a few opinions, because what I want to point out to you is, a piece of fine printing is what you think it is. Art is in the eye of the beholder, in this case. In your own public libraries, which I believe most of you represent, there are many opportunities for evaluating and appreciating and exhibiting books based on such judgement.

Now, to give an example of the problem: I have a bookseller's catalog. Unfortunately, he'll take this in offense--I hope he doesn't if he hears about it, but the compiler is a former student of mine, and he's a partner in this firm. Item 107 in this catalog reads as follows, just to show you where you get into all kinds of opinions, and you're entitled to yours. The entry reads: "Matisse, Henri, illustrator," but the book is *Ulysses* by James Joyce--"folio, original gilt-stamped cloth, slipcased, New York, Limited Editions Club, 1935, a bargain at $2000." It is signed by Joyce and Matisse. It says: "In the history of printing it is rare indeed to find united a great artist and a great author in a great book. This may well be regarded as one of the most important illustrated books of the 20th century." OK, now I'll ask you to evaluate that entry when I say the following: that Matisse's illustrations illustrate Homer and have no relationship whatever to do with the text *per se*. Is this fine printing? Now, in case you want to know my own attitude about such things, the perfect book, no matter how done, is one in which the illustrations, binding, paper, what-have-you, design are all in harmony with perpetrating the text as a unit. But again, you can see--I'm sure some collector saw this and was on the phone before the ink was dry and ordered it, and I hope he's happy because in his eye this is a piece of desirable fine printing, and he's ready to put his money where his mouth is.

There are many other approaches to this definition, that is, what constitutes fine printing or, in more mundane terms, a handsome book. One of the most celebrated of American printers is the late Daniel Berkeley Updike of Boston, and I quote from him because I have found in my studies he is closer to a practical judgement as well as an esthetic judgement than most printers for the simple reason, he had to make it every day. Unlike the Ashendene Press, William Morris, or other basement, backyard or bedroom printers, he had to meet the payroll every week. I remember the late Fred Anthoensen who printed for the Bibliographical Society of America in Portland, Maine, telling me one day, "Well, you know, I have to make the payroll every Friday, no matter what happens," and this is why I think hearing from such a person often gives a better overview than that person who can work "hang the cost" or "hang the time" or whatever. Mr. Updike said, "Perhaps the reason I survived going in business, in spite of mistakes, was that a simple idea had got hold of me to make work better for its purpose than was commonly thought worthwhile about having one's own establishment to be free to do so." He also said, "In the light of the history and art of man's achievement, printing is as interesting a work as exists--a broad and humanizing employment which indeed can be followed merely as a trade, but which, if perfected into an art or even broadened into a profession, will perpetually open new horizons to our eyes and new opportunities to our hands." And may I say, new opportunities for looking at the

results of this printing. Then you have the comment by Mr. Updike that "Books which had great style and elegance were not, it appears, necessarily dependent on archaic treatment for these qualities and are related to books as we know them today more intimately than any that preceded them." From this I should state as an axiom that a book, in order to possess style, need not be archaic (and I underline that with italics all around it with quotes). This self-evident truth is expressed only for the benefit of those persons who, possessing more knowledge than judgement, have worked as if they thought otherwise.

Now, we have two schools of thought, i.e., those who create a book just to make it an eye piece--that is, a piece of art, so to speak. It will probably be the most unread book in the history of the world. The Kelmscott *Chaucer* is probably the most influential book, in some ways, in spite of its grossness in many directions. So we get a conflict. You must know that that exists when you read or see something of value. It would be safe to say that most of the people who talk about fine printing are not talking about anything except the book as a physical object in terms of art.

The late Beatrice Ward, whose book you ought to read if you really want to be amused by a great writer on the subject of printing history--her book *Crystal Goblet*, by the way, I'm quoting from next.

> We may say, therefore, that printing is delightful for many reasons, but that it is important first and foremost as a means of doing something. That is why it is mischievous to call any printed piece a work of art, especially fine art, because that would imply that its first purpose was to exist as an expression of beauty for its own sake and for the delectation of the senses. I always suspect the typographic enthusiast who takes a printed page from a book and frames it to hang on the wall, for I believe that in order to gratify sensory delight, he has mutilated something infinitely more important.

Now, I admit that Beatrice is talking on the other side of the street, namely not making allowance for the fact that there are people who do create books merely as a physical object, and you can take it or leave it on that basis.

I'm going to read you a charge to the jury of a show of works of the American Association of University Presses--they were to choose the best books of the year for an exhibit--to give you still another approach. "Give special consideration to design in its most generic sense--that is, design as planning and problem solving rather than design whose sole object is esthetic principle for its own sake."

Now, I'm not going to labor this any further. I wanted to make sure you understand there are several approaches, and that very often, as I have done, it's possible to get into a discussion with people in which you're talking about one thing, in the sense I've just defined it, and the other person is on the other side of the thing entirely. You have quite a different approach and no meeting of the minds possible whatsoever.

As long ago as March, 1895, in a publication called *The Book Buyer*, an English journal, appears a letter addressed to Mr. Wm. Morris who, of course, was the founder of the Kelmscott Press and was a great influence on the revival of "fine printing" or the interest of the book as a physical object, and certainly raised the consciousness of the trade book publishers. This letter is rather amusing, and I'm sorry I don't have a slide because two of the lines should be projected; but I think you'll get the idea. It says:

> Dear William Morris: I presume that the Kelmscott books are published for your own amusement, because I've inquired extensively and find that they do not amuse anyone else. They are very dull books, much more dull than law books and medical books, and there are only two on your list, the Shakespeare sonnets and the Keats, which I should prefer to a post office directory. You

ignore the masters of printing such as Bodoni, Foulis, Baskerville and Whittingham. All these men printed books in readable type and of a convenient size at a moderate price. [And then the question] What is a readable type? [And at the bottom of this little clipping] Not the Gothic type [which is the heavy black letter like Morris used much of]. What is a convenient size for a book? Not one foot six inches by twelve and of the weight of a good size dumbbell. What is a moderate price for a book? Not six guineas for a volume of 400 pages as *Godeffroy of Boloyne*. If you were consistent, your printing press would exist for the sake of spreading knowledge. As it is, your publications appeal to capitalists and others of the wealthy lower classes who buy their books in order to fill so many yards of shelf space. Your books are bric-a-brac, and they appeal only to a class which, I am told, you are continually condemning. I could give you much if the types were not so ill-chosen. This is my favorite type [he's got about a 16-point beautiful Roman]. This would seem to be yours [he's got a tiny Gothic type under it]. Yours is simply Gothic condensed.

Well, even in the middle of things back in those days, there was someone to blow the whistle on Mr. Morris. I'm a Morris lover and admirer, and this has nothing to do with it. One has to see this in perspective, and the perspective, it seems to me, has two routes for us this morning. One is of self-indulgence and enjoyment, such as being a collector, and secondly is one's responsibility in a library situation. Now, as a matter of course, how many in this room are actually in charge of what we could call specialist collections at any time? There are two present, and that's two more than we guessed, so much of this may apply. Are you all from public libraries, can I assume? Where, for example? College libraries, university libraries. Well, my point is, I'm very disturbed at what's going on in various levels of collecting. I could give a lecture on the gentleperson as a collector who sits in a library chair (nonsexist, because that's the way it was), gentleman, tweedy, pipe-puffing, and perusing book catalogs *ad nauseam* and talking only to book dealers and God. Who else, I don't know.

Now, let me just explain to you why this is on my mind. No matter how you define fine printing, may I point out to you in the Bay Area that starting from the University of San Francisco up the street here, that starting from there--I'm not going to discuss San Francisco State--one can walk to the San Francisco Public Library which is nonresearch (in the sense of history of the book, or history of printing). Then we have Stanford, Mills, UC Berkeley, and Davis and Santa Cruz, and they're all collecting the same thing. They all subscribe to the Book Club of California publications, and countless other libraries are doing this. Now the question is, is this a sensible use of public funds? In my opinion, it is not. May I suggest--I've said this publicly before and will stand on it--again, San Francisco Public Library never was, never will be, and should not be a research library [that is, for research on history of the book, or printing--ed. note]. Therefore, the question becomes one of the librarian as collector. A state university librarian, not present in this room, once took me on a tour of his new library facilities, and his proudest boast was "We haven't got a rare book in the joint. We have no intention of buying fine printing; we do not intend to go into this, and we have no need for this." This gentleman now has a hand printing press; he is buying rare books like they were going out of style. I'm just wondering what his justification for this is. My point is that it has become *mea culpa*. Those of us who teach courses, such as history of the book, corrupt librarians by our enthusiasm--in my case not by printing but other printers getting people steamed up. We see the exhibits that travel around, the Western Book Show, the 50 Books of the Year from the American Institute of Graphic Arts, and countless other things. It's gotten to be like mom and apple pie and the flag for librarians--the thing to do. But I question whether it is the thing to do in the light of the financial situation as it is or will be or may be. The reason for this is easy to understand. We all share a love for books, and a beautiful book obviously is going to hit you more if you're familiar with it through courses

such as we have talked about, and also because of the assault all around by publications like *Fine Print*, programs like this being offered today, and the programs offered by Cal and Stanford that I cited earlier.

Now, my second point that I wanted to come to: Within every public library situation and many university library situations the amount of gorgeous books that come in each year to make collecting of these other--should I say it?--out-and-out decadent books. They are completely decadent, most of them, within the meaning of the dictionary defintion of that term, that is to repeat and do over and over again the old thing.

However, in the last 20 years there has been a revolution in book making. They no longer imitate manuscripts. There are some uses, obviously, that will always remain. We never had a curtain drop between the 19th and the 20th century with everything disappearing thereupon. It's true of printing especially. But basically there is a whole new group of young designers in the commercial field. Remember the book I cited--Williamson's *Book Design; practice of an industrial craft.* It's gotten so heavy now that there are even firms that specialize in book designing as opposed to just individuals, such as Adrian Wilson, a designer here in San Francisco. This has become a large, widespread and, should I say, diversified kind of activity because of the diversity of talent. And, too, the new printing processes which are generally not involved in the kinds of books that we were trying to outline as fine printing. There are very exciting books being put out every day--paperback and hardbound both, and every library receives them. The only difference between these and the others are: 1) the new ones do not resemble the old ones very much in their physical layout, and 2) they're not produced by traditional processes.

One of the things that I haven't heard any of these sharp rare books librarians tell me is how they're beginning to collect "beautiful examples" of the new processes, and I mean computer produced books. I hope you are all aware that it is possible now to take typescript, shove it in a machine, and have a book come out the other end if you just put the machine together. They don't do it that way--the machine that does the printing, the folding and the binding they usually keep separate from the typesetting activity. All you need is to stuff the typescript into the machine. The pages, the running titles, the page numbers, and the indexing can all be done in a computer. Not another thing has to be done. A position for illustrations can be provided for on the page. But there is no reason why it can't be done well. Ah, that it's sometimes done poorly is not the fault of anything but the individual who is in charge of the machine, or the budgetary or other problems that command a cheap performance. Nobody's collecting these, of course. It's beneath their dignity, because they're only interested in the traditional, what I call decadent, book. Everybody's still plowing these into their libraries without any thought as to what somebody would like to see 50 years or 100 years from now that represent what is, in my opinion, good design. If you don't believe me, walk into Brentano's or any other bookstore around town, or any of the paperback stores, and start looking at them.

Paperbacks are a special case, because they have to sell at point of contact, so covers are made, as dust jackets are, as a hucksterism. I learned a great deal from Ms. North of Howell-North Books many years ago, because I was a little more arty than she was, I guess, in my approach. She said "But you'll never sell a book on the shelf that way," and then she pointed out to me how on the dust jacket, where the title and author and the punch had to be, no matter how it was displayed, so that the person walking by could see it and get that punch--advertising punch in this case. So these factors are involved, but they can be done well.

Of course, you're all familiar with the "collector"--I don't know how librarians deal with this these days--but the collector whose home you might visit and see all his books in dust jackets, but you never see the bindings. It amuses me to find people who have fine books, to find that many printers don't print anything but merely sort of a protective wrapper for many of these limited editions. You go into somebody's house,

and you just see the protective wrapper and never see the bindings. This is absurd. *Ad absurdum*, of course, is a good deal of this. When I buy a book the first thing I do is throw away the dust jacket, unless I'm going to carry it on campus every day to teach or something like that, but generally speaking that's my reaction. I'm only going to live once, and I want to enjoy the bindings that are on my shelf--the design, whatever went into them, whether they're limited editions or not.

Now you notice that I've worked the term limited editions into my tirade here this morning. This is the other part that turns off many librarians and collectors. Because it's done in beautiful design on 10,000 copies, it is of no interest to them; but if it's done in beautiful design, or lousy design even, on 100 copies--aha! they will beat the doors down to buy it. That is another one of the ironies and, of course, nonsense that we're facing.

You are as good a judge of what is fine printing as anyone. In your own libraries you could make an outstanding exhibit, if that's what you want, each year of commercial books, so-called, which come into your library in every possible field, paperbacks included; and I recommend that you try it sometime. As you're working, if you work in technical processing or somewhere where you can see the materials as they're coming in, you can walk in and just sort of scan them through, pick up a few when you've got a moment. You'll be amazed at what you would see, if you'll just get rid of any preconceptions that you're trying to find William Morris or the Ashendene or the Grabhorn or even Lawton Kennedy. Within this you will see vestiges of all these, of course, but the fact is that the newer books now do not resemble the books I've just described. The ones I'm thinking of, especially in what I call landscape formats, are put together with a great deal of skill.

May I suggest one other thing that is heretic also. The easiest thing in the world with which to make patterns on a page is poetry. The hardest thing to do right and make attractive in an esthetic sense is a solid text. That's why I would like to do a thesis sometime on why there has been such a poetry boom in the sense of how much of it gets printed. It's the easiest thing. The reason I say this is, I've got students who don't know anything about it coming into my lab year after year, and after five minutes of instruction they can do as well as anybody else, because there's room to move things in white space. You can make patterns much easier than you can when you've got the traditional block--even if it's ragged right, ragged left, or whatever modern gimmick you're going to use. Please note, that's not a modern gimmick, because you know that manuscripts are ragged right, and much earlier printing also.

So in the sense of the public library then, it seems to me completely unjustified, except if you want to collect local people, to collect fine printing as such. Where do you begin and end, for example? There's a flood of it all over the country. California is the leading flooder, as it were. The fact is, you have to draw the line, and it doesn't make any sense.

Now, here's where you're stuck as librarians--namely, that you have very often in limited editions printed reference material that you have to have. It may be Western history; it may be something more general. I'm thinking, for research libraries, of something I was involved in at UC. They did a handful of copies of 48 volumes, four columns to the page, 800 pages to the book, in a limited edition to sell for $10,000, and they managed to sell a few. It was the kind of thing, obviously not intended to be fine printing, that somebody had to have. There are items, however, that are strictly fine printing. I can think of several book club publications--you may think I seem negative about them, but I'm not--that ought to be in libraries. They have literary or bibliographic implications for various libraries.

After I took a theme like this at the CLA Conference on Rare Books a couple of years ago, the only person who challenged me was a bookseller from Los Angeles who was unhappy because I attacked the San Francisco Public Library for having a rare books collection, as we understand them, when Cal, Stanford, Mills, USF, and everybody else

is in the same act. They all collect the same material--make no mistake. At the end of my lecture a lady walked up from the back row, and her badge said a library from the south of San Francisco. She said "I'd like to ask you a question." I said "What is it? I'd be happy to try to make up an answer." She said "Well, my library started, through a predecessor, to acquire the Book Club of California publications and they've been accumulating through the years. They're in an area of storage we could use. They've never been removed from the boxes. They are sitting there, piling up, falling over. What should I do with them?" So I gave her the name of the nearest bookseller and said "Use it for material which you do need." But somebody had the idea that it would be good for them, that there would be "use for it," etc.

If you can justify it on another scale, not on use--many libraries are buying what I call high spots for the purpose of public relations. My friends are involved in this; I'm attacking nothing but friends and very deep friends when I say San Francisco Public Library needs that copy of Moxon's *Mechanick Exercises on the Whole Art of Printing* in its original edition, 1683, like I need a second hole in my head, for the simple reason, it is utterly useless to a student. The Davis and Carter edition of '58 is wonderful--superb annotation. It's the one that is useful to the student. And what did it do with the Board of Supervisors, please tell me, to aid and abet the plight of San Francisco Public Library, that would be its justification? There is already a copy at Stanford, and if you have one person in 10 years that comes in to need it, he can make the next 40 miles to Stanford; and the $7500 that went to buy that book, it seems to me, could have been used, even if it were donated money, which most of it was, to much better purpose for the City.

That is my thesis of how *mea culpa*. We get a lot of people steamed up--printers, teachers of the history of the book--and then we have to stand and shoot them down. Thank you.

* * *

THE COMMERCIAL DECISION

Frederick H. Murphy

I'm the president of Holden-Day Publishing Company. We were incorporated in California in 1959, and we publish about 250 titles, mainly college and university level books, in the fields of mathematics, chemistry, science and business. We're pretty much a textbook company, but we do have several items that sell in the trade field, and I brought some examples to show you. I think the decisions about the quality and the types of manufacture, the various processes and materials used in the textbooks, are decisions that are similar to those made by trade companies. We are not restricted in the selection of materials or the quality of manufacture as some elementary and high school publishers are. Their specifications are established by the Book Manufacturers Institute and certain specs regulate a certain type of binding, glue, paper and all that type of thing. We don't have to do that.

I have here some things--my little bag of tricks. This is a sample book from one of the major manufacturers of binding materials. With the price of cotton increasing incredibly over the last several years, many publishers have gone to nonwoven materials. It's pretty much plastic coated paper. If you'd like to look at some of those, they come in different qualities and a tremendous array of colors. A lot of publishers are getting away from cloth-bound books strictly because of economics.

Many publishers are also getting away from stamped books. More and more are manufacturing books without dust jackets, only because the paper has increased in price so much. What they're going into now is what they call a preprinted cover. I'm sure you've seen these. This is a preprinted cover [displayed]. It's done on a paper that has texture. It almost would fool you. It almost feels like cloth, but it's not. This book is an 800-page book, and it was done with a perfect binding. I guess librarians don't like it. The perfect bound books tend to be a little flat, but it saves an awful lot of handwork on the sewing, and with the improvements in the glues, namely epoxy glues, we think we can get a reasonbly good binding. Now, this is a big book, an expensive book--it's about $24. It's a book that would be lugged around campus each day for a semester and in some cases for a year. We've had very little complaint about the binding falling apart.

The game textbook publishers play with paper is: The best books are the ones we make look big. We use fat paper. This book actually could be printed on low-bulk paper and it would be somewhere close to half the size. Really what it comes down to is the selection of the paper. You want to accomplish certain things. If it's a book that has a lot of half tones and heavy illustrations, we'll use a paper that has a higher opacity so there won't be so much show-through. But I think a lot of it, at least at our company, comes down to the individual designer who has worked on the book who has some likes or dislikes. He likes the feel of this paper; he says it has more patina. I think pretty much the individual designer or production manager selects these. I think some of the companies--let's say large trade houses like Random House--probably have some house papers that they would use, because they could buy in such large quantities. Let's say they'll order five or six railroad cars loaded with paper and it's just held as inventory. Then they'll print only on that paper, because it's cheaper by bulk. If they have a special book, they might want to buy a special paper, but I think for the most part many publishers are tending toward a standard size and a standard paper.

Here's another book [displayed]. This book we've been working on for 10 years. I think it's a very attractive book and very likely will win some awards for its production. For this particular book, we ordered five different samples of types of papers, and had those five different types of paper printed with six different types

of ink to see how this ink would go with this paper. Sometimes your eyes fool you. You don't really know and can't imagine how it would look. We did this on an off-white paper with a dark brown ink. That's because this book is heavily illustrated and the combination of the two, the illustrations and the off-color paper, gives the best effect. Most students are going to be reading this book at night, and with the off-white paper the reflection is not so high. Then we did an interesting thing. This part is the text, and this portion is the solution manual--I mean the solutions to the problems in the book. So to make it eaay for the students to use it, we printed it on a very light tint, so you can see when the book is closed it breaks it up to make it more of a tool.

Question
How much will that book sell for?

Mr. Murphy
$19.95.

Question
Is it sewn?

Mr. Murphy
No, it's a glued book.

When I first got into this business I was with Addison-Wesley. We used to visit the bindery. When the books were bound, they were using animal glues. The books were stacked on a piece of plywood with a metal edge. They would take the cover of the book and place it along the metal edge to form the joint. Then they'd take another piece of plywood and another layer of books, another layer of plywood and another layer of books, and the whole stack was put under pressure, something like a wine press. They would keep those books in there for about 10 days until the glue dried. Well, that was a very expensive way to do it, but we had to do it because we didn't have these chemical, epoxy glues. Now when a book is glued, they take them right off the binding assembling line, put them in a box and it goes to the warehouse. Evidently this has been causing some problems in libraries; I don't know where.

Here is a book that was done in 1966 [displayed]. Again, we went to a lot of trouble to select paper, the design, the type and illustrations. This is a sewn book. If we were to do it now it would be a perfect binding, glued. I couldn't sell the book, so I sold the paperback rights to Dell, and they sold 256,000 copies of the book. You can see the care that went into this book. It's a sewn book, and it's done well, but if we were to do the book now--that is, a hardbound book--we would do it in perfect binding.

I'm not sure if this is all you want me to talk about, but if you have questions I'll be more than happy to try to answer them.

Question
Have you given up sewing because of the cost?

Mr. Murphy
Yes. I think personally that perfect bound books are as good, if not better, than sewn books. But to answer your question, yes, because of cost and time.

Question
Do you sew any books?

Mr. Murphy
Not if we can help it. We may have to go to a certain manufacturer and get a certain

schedule or something, and they may not have the capability of producing a perfect bound book. So we might have a sewn binding on occasion, but not as a rule.

Bonnie Dopp
Mr. Murphy, excuse me, but this book was published in 1966. It's perfect binding, and this morning when I talked about materials in books I illustrated [by tearing off pages as from a memo pad]. That's what happens to perfect bindings. Now, if you had done this book in 1966 with a glued binding, this is what would be happening to it. What do you say to that? We're interested.

Mr. Murphy
That it's not glued as well as our books. But let me ask you this. I'm not sure just how a librarian comes to a decision to buy a book, but do trade publishers or some publishers have special library editions?

Ms. Dopp
Mostly for children's books, but rarely for adults.

Mr. Murphy
OK, let me just make another point about the glued binding. There was a time, and many people can still remember it, when you could buy a refrigerator and it would last for 30 years. I just bought one three years ago and it's broken; I had to buy a new one. I think, frankly, it's an indication of an attitude that is happening in this country where mediocrity is the norm. In our business we do not want to build these books to last a lifetime, because with the advent of the computer, the used book market is a horrendous negative outlet of our business. Let's say a student was a freshman at Berkeley and bought a freshman chemistry book. At the end of the year he would try to sell it back. Years ago another kid would come along and buy that book, and the book would stay on campus. Now used bookstores have buyers that go around and buy up these books, not only from students but from the professors as well. Then they send them back and say "We're sending back so many copies of this book." Well, it says on the front of it "Complimentary copy, not for resale." Then they want a credit for a sale never made. What happens now is people accumulate these books; they might accumulate, let's say, 200 copies of a book at Berkeley, 200 copies of the same book at San Jose State, put them together and ship them to Florida State or the University of Montana. So it's a huge traffic, and each time the book is sold the publisher is deprived of the sale and the author who wrote the book is deprived of royalties. So there is a calculated decision here not to make these books so they'll last forever.

Question
Aside from textbooks--we realize that that's your expertise--what about the novel that Random House publishes and perfect binds on very high acid paper that we hope will last on our shelves for some years?

Mr. Murphy
I'm really not familiar enough with what would go into a trade book decision about the quality of manufacturing; but I would guess, to speak very candidly, some of those same elements would go into that decision, not to bind the book to last so the libraries will have to buy a new one.

Mr. Fowler
Bonnie and I did talk to the production manager at Random House and he said that I might quote him. He said that they anticipate a lifetime of about 8-10 years, and it is not that they do not consider libraries--we asked him exactly that, "Are you thinking only of the individual person or of the library market too?" He said they anticipate a lifetime of 8-10 years at Random House.

Question
Two questions: Do you know what percentage of your market is represented by libraries, academic and other libraries?

Mr. Murphy
For a company like Holden-Day I would say maybe 10-12%.

Question
And would you say a little bit about the retail pricing decision?

Mr. Murphy
In our company we take the total cost of manufacturing to develop the unit cost of the book, and we would hope that we could, including royalties, have a gross profit of 60%. There's some give and take with this, but usually, if you price books somewhere between 4.6 and 5 times the cost of manufacture, you will come up with a number. It will give you desired rate of gross profit, and then you have to say "Is this a reasonable price?" Sometimes it might be too high; sometimes it might be too low.

Question
How good are you at gauging sales of potential titles?

Mr. Murphy
I'm very glad you asked that question. Let me answer that with an example. We published a book on the subject of time series analysis and managerial forecasts by a professor at the University of Chicago. It's mostly sophisticated statistical techniques used in forecasting. So I was very excited about this book, and I brought him a personal copy and I said "OK, now that you've got a Ph.D. and you're teaching all these bright, wonderful kids at the University of Chicago management and business on how to forecast, I want you to tell me how many copies this book is going to sell." He said "Please get out of my office." It's a very difficult thing, and we just have to come up with some numbers, almost by intuition; but we know what other books in this market have sold, and we know the type of promotion budget for this kind of book, and it's a best guess. It's really a guess. This book, for example, we could get one order for 3000 copies. There's lag time to get it back into inventory, so what I've done is hedge my bet here. I've printed 10,000 copies and bound 5000, because I can get copies bound faster than printed and bound.

Question
Do you make an independent estimate of your break-even?

Mr. Murphy
There's a thorough financial analysis done on each book, even before you offer the contract to the author, and then it's done again when the manuscript is transmitted to production, and then done again when the book is published, because a lot of factors can change during that period.

Question
How do you do that financially? When you get a manuscript, can you tell us what you do about this financial appraisal?

Mr. Murphy
Well, we have to make an estimate of the total number of pages when the book is set in type. We would have some idea, let's say, that the book was going to cost us $22 a page to set in type, including galley proofs, page proofs and production proofs.

Say it's going to be a 480-page book. We would have some feel for the cost of paper, the printing, the binding; and then we would come up with a unit cost. Based on that cost, we would establish a retail price, and then allowing some discounts, what the net receipts would be. Then we would try to predict what first year, second year, third year sales of the book were going to be; then we can come up with some pretty sound financial break-even on this.

Question
What percentage of the production of the book is binding, paper, printing and so on?

Mr. Murphy
In our company it's approximately 28%--paper, printing, binding and typeset. There are all kinds of games you can play with accounting. This book--total cost input, including cumulative editorial time, copy edit, proofreading, typesetting, art work--was approximately $150,000. Now, we first printed 5000 copies, so what we do is estimate the life of the book and then, to keep the arithmetic simple, let's say that the book is going to sell in its lifetime, our best guess, 150,000 copies. So each time we reprint a copy of that book, the composition of the plant cost is added to the cost of paper and printing by $1. So let's say it costs us $2 actually to buy the paper, to print and bind the book, and so we have now $3. And let's say the author's royalty is $2 a copy, so that the unit cost of that book is $5. We just reprint, reprint and reprint. Then let's say we use up more than 150,000 copies. Well, that just increases our profit on that book by $1. Once those fixed prices have been wiped off, from our point of view, we don't drop the price.

Question
Does the 60% profit factor include the 40% that retail booksellers get?

Mr. Murphy
Yes, that's after discount.

Question
Is $2 actually a realistic estimate of what the author would get?

Mr. Murphy
Yes, it is, for this particular book. The royalties on this book... Sometimes, when I send the author's check, I think I'm on the wrong side. I should write a couple of books, because once you do the work, it just flows in. This book--the retail price is $19.95, and our seller's discount is 25%, so that's $15, and the author gets 15% of the cash received on the book. For this book the author gets 10% of the cash we receive. So it's not unreal that an author of one of these kinds of books could make $1.50, $2.00, $2.50 a book.

Question
Would that be about the same for trade titles?

Mr. Murphy
I think the royalties vary quite a bit in the trade. An author who's an unknown author would be willing to accept less of a royalty rate to get the book published. Once he becomes an established author, he'll probably get a higher rate. But I don't think, in any event, that it would go more than 15% of the cash received.

The other thing with a lot of these trade companies, they never make any money on a lot of these books, but where they make money is with subsidiary rights--with the movies or whatever. This book right here has a big market in other languages.

We've sold it now in seven languages. We got back almost half of the $150,000 used to produce the book in the form of language rights--Japanese, Spanish, Portuguese.

I met a professor at a meeting last week in Anaheim who, as a young man, translated a chemistry book into Japanese, and after 22 years his income from doing that translation was higher than his salary as a full professor at the University of Tokyo.

Question
How do you establish your booklist? Do you solicit, or do they come in unsolicited, or do you have people who go out and find people to...

Mr. Murphy
It comes in all ways, but primarily we have sales representatives who go out and find the professors. The professor will say "Well, no, I'm not interested in your book. I've tried it, and it's not very good. I count on my own notes." That information is communicated to us, and we get the notes, get them reviewed, and if it looks good, we'll try to place the author under contract.

Last year we had submitted to us slightly in excess of 800 manuscript proposals, in various forms of completion, from an idea to a finished manuscript. Of the 800, after going through this filtering system, we offered contracts on 30 and signed up 26. We lost four to other publishers. Of the 26, maybe 15 will be published, and of the 15 maybe 5 will sell with any significance.

Comment from audience
The thing that concerns me is the lack of quality in the use of the English language in books, and that many titles don't seem to be edited very carefully.

Mr. Murphy
I'm very pleased you mentioned that. I began in this business as a salesman, selling books to college professors. I was always very interested in the quality of the books that I sold, and the professors were interested in the quality. But things have happened in this country now. Whereas 15 years ago a potential user of a book would want to know the quality of the content of the book, now the first question they ask is "What is the reading level?" Now, what that forces us to do--the Flesch Test. Are you familiar with the Flesch Test? How many sentences in a paragraph, how many words in a sentence, how many syllables in the average number of words--it's a quantitative test to determine the reading level of the book. Now, this is significant, that the cream of the California high school output, say at Berkeley, the percentage of students who flunked subject A or the equivalent of subject A last year was something like 80%. The kids can't read, so that puts us in an awkward position. Do we pander to this disability, or do we write a book at a reasonable level that's a well-written book but that we can't sell because the kids can't read it? It puts us in a very difficult position. My own feeling is, I'm not going to lower the level of my book to the level of the students--bring the students up to the level of the book.

Mr. Fowler
This has been the subject of another BARC workshop about literacy. We want to concentrate on production, not content.

Question
What I had in mind was the large number of typographical errors, misprints and misspellings found in so many books, and it seems that the university press books are among the worst offenders.

Mr. Murphy
I don't really know how to answer that question. We have in our own company... This

particular book [displayed], this organic chemistry book--we had a brilliant production editor, fabulous. She went over that manuscript probably 10 times, looked at the galley proofs three times, as did the author. The typesetter also had to proofread it. The first printing--the review appeared saying "I've never seen a book with so many typographical errors." It took us until the fourth printing to have the book 98% error free. I really don't know how to do it. It drives me nuts. It just happens. Now, maybe it's happening at a rate that's increasing--slovenly, or whatever you want to call it. That might be.

Question
Do you have good proofreaders?

Mr. Murphy
We do, very bright people. I employ young bright women from Radcliffe, Smith, Bryn Mawr, the whole bit. They want to get into publishing and I say "How'd you do in spelling in fourth grade?" I hire book salesmen, and I hire them on the quality of their penmanship--all college graduates.

Question
What about the spread between hardbound and paperback? Some books will be $19 hardbound and $8 paper; another book...

Mr. Murphy
It's a bit of a rip-off. The actual cost for the hard binding of the same book--this book right here--between cloth and paper is about a dollar. But if we were to make it available in hardbound, I guarantee you the retail price of the hardbound edition would be at least 10 bucks above the paperback. It's a rip-off.

Question
What would be a reasonable difference between hardbound and paper?

Mr. Murphy
I would have to say $3 would be reasonable.

OK, have I done my job? I'll leave some of these books here for you to look at and some of these samples.

* * *

Ed. note: Following Mr. Murphy's remarks, a recently published title was announced which amplifies much of the material covered by Murphy.

Benjamin, Curtis G. *Candid Critique of Book Publishing.* Bowker, 1977. ISBN 0835210332.

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CONSERVATION AND PRESERVATION

Donald Etherington

I thought I might just talk about the preservation program at LC very quickly. We started at LC in 1970 under Frazer Poole. One of the things we tried to do was to envision the program developing over the next 10 years, so we started a training program. Most of the people at LC now in the Restoration Office have been there no longer than 5 years. Actually the Restoration Shop is only one aspect of the preservation program. The division is divided into five areas.

One is the collection and maintenance crew, which goes around the stacks, moving large collections from one place to another, cleaning--general cleaning, not cleaning of the items, but cleaning of the stacks.

The other section is the library binding section, which has a budget of a million and a little bit for the year's library binding. That's a lot larger than most other libraries, I think; and I think they do approximately 250,000 books a year. So to service that material through the library, it needs a staff somewhere in the range of 20-30 people.

The other section is the microfilming section. Some of you must know the library has about 6 million brittle books that are really not able to be handled, so there's an active program of microfilming. There's a large budget for that also, but I don't know the figures. I heard a figure that it costs approximately $35 a book, which seemed to me pretty expensive, but I gather that's what it takes to handle the book from the beginning to the end.

Then, of course, there's the section I'm in, which is preservation and restoration. That's divided into two parts. One is the research and testing lab; the other is the restoration shop. The preservation research and testing has three chemists plus three assistants. The restoration shop has 35 restorers or trainee restorers. We tend not to use the term restorers too much. Now it's generally conservators, and it's basically split up into two major areas. One is in rare book conservation, and the other is art on paper restoration which deals in all materials of flat work--drawings, prints, watercolors, whatever. We deal only in anything that the library has on paper. There is no restoration of works of art on canvas and such.

As I started to say, we began under Frazer Poole in 1970. Because there seemed to be a lack of trained people in the States, we set up a program in the beginning not to try to go out and hire established personnel but to train them from the beginning in the way that we felt they should be trained. Since then we have a super staff of young people, and we're very, very proud of the operation there and the work that's being turned out. It's a very expensive operation, because the more expertise you get, the more personnel, the less work in numbers you may turn out. That's because the work that the staff chooses to do, or that is chosen for them to do, may be more valuable, so it becomes a pretty tricky balance, because we do have to think about the Library as a whole. It's not just rare books.

In the rare book section, for example, we deal with all parts of the library that cannot be handled by the library binding program. In fact, it's very interesting in this photo [displayed]. This is just a view of one-half of the workshop. In the foreground there are books stacked up, and that is the *National Intelligencer*. If any of you have ever seen the *National Intelligencer*, you know that it's a very valuable newspaper. It has been totally microfilmed. We have two copies at the library. The project in our shop was to take the two copies, separate them, pick one sheet, the best of the two copies, then restore them and put them in an archival copy. So in the foreground in that photo there is a result of that project. We've only done, I think, 64 volumes so far, but each volume is divided into four bindings, and each

binding takes 40 hours of work, so you can tell that it's an enormous project. It's a project that generally the young conservators get very excited about when they start, but get very bored when they've done about 20 books each.

So we don't just do rare book material in the shop, even though the personnel title is listed as a rare book conservator. That helps the salary levels one can apply for. The salaries are very good at the Library. We start as a GS-5, which is approximately $10,000-$11,000, and go up to a GS-11. So the competition for the positions is very great. For one position that we may have vacant, we have 60 applicants, and they come from a variety of fields. A lot come from library schools. Many come from the art field with an art degree; and others just come off the street. We've got a cross section. We've chosen people from off the street; we've chosen some who've got some qualifications.

We do the selection by a unique method, within the library anyway, because there's a resistance, seemingly, in the field, or in any field, to test people out, to see whether they're good enough. We do, in fact, give them a test. We give them a manual dexterity test and a formal interview. We had to fight tooth and nail to get the library to accept that procedure, but it's vital when 90% of the activity is with your hands, and paper qualifications don't mean too much.

Anyway, as I said, the emphasis was, first of all, training, and then to develop standards which could be applied throughout the field of conservation. Another one of our goals was to produce leaflets, procedures, workshop notes, and to go out into the field, such as this, and spread the gospel, shall we say.

Some of the new techniques that we've developed at the Library--some of you must have heard about polyester encapsulation for brittle material, phase boxing, and the new machine that we have for leaf casting. It's a machine that repairs voids in paper by pulp. You don't add new paper to it. It's pulp, and you draw it through a vacuum. It fills up all the holes, but it doesn't go on the surface that does not have a hole in it. It's a very satisfactory method.

What I'm going to do is talk about some of those things that we do at LC. Then I'm going to mention some of the things that I think libraries can do on their own. We get very concerned about the do-it-yourself situation, because it can get very tricky when one is telling somebody to go and repair or deacidify paper. Without the proper equipment, the proper procedures and so on, you can get yourself into an awful mess, and there can be a lot of damage done. If the Library of Congress says do this or do that, then we hear "Why the hell are you telling these people to do this? They've damaged this or they've lost this." So we're not really telling people to do it yourself, but there are some things I think people can do. Then I'm going to make some comment about commercial library binding that may be of help to you. Then we'll see what time it is and maybe have some questions.

I'll talk about this do-it-yourself type of operation. Basically, some of the simplest things need to be done. Some of the most basic are cleaning the shelves, wiping the books, making sure there aren't any bugs around, that it's not damp, that the temperature is controlled. All of this, I know, is very easy to say, but in all your libraries that's a major project--to keep temperature and humidity control and all the other controls that you don't have. It's very, very difficult. I don't know about the San Francisco air. I assume it's not too bad. In the Washington, D.C. area, for instance, it gets very cold in the winter and very hot in the summer, so our area is particularly bad for changing environment. The Library of Congress established air conditioning about 15 years ago, but prior to that period the stacks would get up to over 100 and down to awful temperatures in the winter. So there's been a tremendous period of damage whilst books have been housed at the Library of Congress. Of course, now it's improved tremendously, but it's very difficult for LC to control temperature and humidity, because the public uses the library, the doors are open, and it's just impossible to control. The rare book stacks are pretty much closed to the public, so there's a better control there, and they've installed a new system which seems to be very satisfactory.

Basic cleaning is important. It can be done by anyone if they've got a modicum of sense. Also, going through to find all the brittle folders that house documents and manuscripts is an easy job. Those can be exchanged for acid-free folders. That should be an ongoing program. The folders are not very expensive. Places like Hollinger Corp. in Virginia sell acid-free material for boxing and folders. We tend to like folders better than envelopes, because a tremendous amount of damage is done with brittle material when you take it in and out of envelopes, so we try to encourage folders. Of course, going along with that changing bad material for good material, there should be a program, if it's possible, to identify items that need major treatment. That is something that's very local. You have to develop systems to fit the collections. I couldn't just say "Well, this is the system; go and use it," because it may not fit the situation at all.

The other obvious thing that you could do is polyester encapsulation. That's a very simple method to preserve manuscripts, brittle material, large newspapers. Newspapers in libraries tend to get very damaged because they are used a lot. They're printed on poor material so that handling of the newspaper damages them greatly. Putting them into polyester, you can treat them very roughly and you don't have to do anything to the material itself. You could deacidify if you knew what to do, but there's no repairing needed for material that goes into polyester encapsulation. If they're in loose parts, if the newspaper is in pieces, then you do have to attach the pieces with what we call heat set tissue. If you don't have that, I'm not sure now what you would do. Generally, if you've got material that is all torn and not parted, you can put it into polyester and no more repairing needs to be done.

I've shown this to some, but this is my example. This is brittle paper; it's not too brittle, but it's fairly brittle. Well, in this polyester encapsulation, which is two sides of polyester sealed with double sided tape--we'll put the same sheet of brittle paper inside the polyester envelope. I've never done it with this paper, so let's hope it works. [Encapsulated material is crumpled, then flattened out, then removed from the polyester envelope.] You see it's in good shape, which is rather remarkable. Don't ask me to explain--I don't know what goes on. There's a law of physics, I gather, and if anybody's a chemist, they'll explain very clearly. But it means the two surfaces of polyester take all the strain out and somehow don't break up the brittle paper inside, which is sort of remarkable really. But it's a simple operation. All you need is a pair of scissors, a knife, polyester, double-sided tape, and you can go at it. What's nice about that type of situation is that there's no problem that somebody unskilled could do damage to the material.

We obviously have many variations on this theme. What you saw there was a four-sided seal. If you wanted to process brittle material for microfilming--I don't know if you've got this problem, but at the Library of Congress the material is so brittle that the camera operators take forever to turn the leaves of a book, because they can't handle the material quickly to get it under the camera. So sometimes it comes to us, and we put it in what we call a single-sided seal. That's just with this one seal on the long side, and you put the brittle material in there. Of course, you can't crinkle it up like I've just done. The camera operator then just flips it through, and it's very quick. Microfilming is no problem through mylar or polyester film.

Sometimes, of course, material that is very valuable has to be microfilmed. There's a photograph here of the Jefferson copy book that had been eaten right through. The ink had eaten all the paper, so there's a great void throughout the book. It's on India paper or onionskin paper, and there's no way the camera operator could even separate the leaves. So we separated them, repaired them, put them in a four-sided seal, then got it microfilmed and then rebound it in a sympathetic manner.

Another of the things that one could do is to shelve everything properly. You know, in going into the stacks you find these very large folios standing on their ends, leaning over the rest of the books, wrapping them around. Well, it would be rather

nice to be able to move those large folios and store them horizontally instead of on their end. If you don't have any choice, it's best to stack the book on the spine and not on the fore-edge. But it's better, if possible, to store folios horizontally, and one book/one shelf. Of course, that's easier said than done. I know, in most libraries they're saying "Well, there's no room," or "You can't move that book because it's difficult to catalog," or something like that. Well, maybe it is, but there are times when you can do these things and they're just not done.

Then the other thing that one could do is make simple boxes. At the Library of Congress they're real pushy on boxes; we try to get everybody to make boxes, and of course, there's a lot of emphasis on rare books, but there are many books in the general collection that need some protection. We have a number of styles of boxes. We have a phase box, which is made in half an hour, maybe quicker. We have now a new clamshell box which is made in two hours, and we have a rare book box which takes 10 hours. We're trying to develop a method of making a box which would come to the library all flat, collapsed. The custodian could just take out one and fold it to whatever size suits that particular volume. But for the moment, it has defied our great brains to achieve something. We feel the packaging industry should be able to come up with an answer for us, but it is tricky with books, because they're all various sizes. They're fat, they're skinny, they're long, short, stubby; and it really is very difficult. But there are a couple of ideas, one from England that the British Library developed, which is like a carton, all serrated and creased at intervals of, say, 1/4 of an inch either way, and you can use that. It seems to work, but we're looking into that. So boxing, of course, is very important, and the phase box program is a very important program. We try to push phase boxing.

We had a fight on our hands--not much of a fight really, considering, but we went into the European Law Division, where there are 8000 European law books ranging from 15th century to 19th century--a tremendous collection of books. They had previously been eaten away by some great insect that had eaten all the spines of the books and had a real great feed. I don't know how many years they had been eating on the books, but all the books basically had lost their bindings, and all the leaves were now separated, and the sweepers would come in and sweep up remnants of the bindings and bits of paper. Parts of books that had been separated by the librarian for easy cataloging was evident in the collection, and so, because we're interested in structure and history, we thought this would be a nice collection to try to persuade the librarians of the Law Library to reshelve by size. Shelving by size is a lovely idea. We wish we could influence all of you to go and reshelve your collections in that manner. But, of course, I know that's not too feasible in every case. There may, however, be some isolated collections that could be reshelved by size, because there's tremendous damage done by shelving books by subject or whatever--they wrap around each other; they break down at the spine. A tremendous amount of damage is done purely by shelving in a normal manner. So we offered the carrot, that if they would reshelve by size we would box their 8000 books for them.

So we had to come up with a box which was relatively easy to make. We've made it easier than ever since we first developed it. Once upon a time it was one piece of card, and you had to measure it all out and cut the four corners out and fold it. Well, now it's made in two separate strips, so it's just two separate simple pieces of card creased at the correct place and stuck together underneath the book, so it's a very simple box to make now. Anyway, the reason we used to persuade them to reshelve by size was this is a collection that is little used. It's not used every day. We hope that we will be able to go back in 10, 15, 20 years to restore the books. So these are now temporary books. We did not want these books to be shelved as they were originally, because if they did come out of their boxes and were rebound, then if they were restacked in the same way as they were previously, they would, over a period of years, deteriorate again. We wanted the books to be supportive of each other, so we

got the library to agree. It did mean a tremendous amount of recataloging, of course, because--well, you're librarians; I don't have to tell you this, but it means recataloging if you move the books.

While we were doing the phase boxing of those books, we took a survey of the preservation needs of each book. We developed a card with a whole group of numbers on it and a place for a photograph, a record of the size, where it came from, the year of publication, and we marked this computer-like card with the type of preservation needed for the book. Now we've just finished. It's taken us quite a number of years to finish these 8000, but the job is finished now. I think the librarians think of them as book coffins more than book boxes. They think the book is really dead now that it's covered up in a box, but it really isn't. I can only hope that we'll get back to that project. So that's another job that could be done with little or no equipment, and a very important situation. For instance, that's a vellum binding [photographed example shown to audience] that you see there, and it is distorted, though not as bad as some. Well, the phase box is designed in such a way that it is cut and folded to take up the unevenness. There are threads that wrap around and create a tension on the box, so it's put in the box under tension while it's being stored. Movement of the vellum binding, which contracts and expands in the varying temperatures, can't happen, so it keeps a much better control over the book.

Here are some pictures showing the making of the boxes [displayed to audience]. You can see the threads there, and we just wrap them around a plastic-type button that we cut out of hard plastic, and there's a finished box. It takes half an hour to make.

This is the Jefferson copy book [photograph shown to audience]. You can see the void that's been created, eaten away by the ink. Some are really worse than this. As you can see, it's a four-sided seal. They all went on to microfilm, then they came back, and you see that we rebound this book.

That's brittle material that you see [photograph shown to audience]. This is the Houdini collection. You can see how brittle the material is. It shows you how the use of poor materials has created a problem. Houdini had a scrapbook, and this is the actual pasting of his posters, or artifacts, or whatever, of his shows on this brittle material. All the supports of this brittle material are now deteriorating tremendously, and it's creating tremendous damage to the artifact itself, because it's breaking down.

Now here's a picture showing the Jefferson copy book [photograph displayed]. This is what we call a polyester book. It does have a leather spine. We did make a bit of a fuss with this because it's to go back into the rare book division--you know, polyester and rare books don't really go very well together. You see it doesn't open very far because it's a stamped binding, but that's the finished binding. It's contained in a box that was made for it. You see the two new bindings, and you see it took two new bindings from one old binding. So there is a tremendous addition of thickness, but now it is safe and preserved, and it should last another 200-300 years.

This is showing you an alternative [photograph displayed], which is relatively simple that could be done with a limited amount of training and material. You may feel that polyester creates too much weight and is a factor that isn't really very good. This is protecting the *National Intelligencer*. You notice that it's interleaved with Permalife paper, and the Permalife paper is much larger than the original item. That works very nicely. You can handle the Permalife paper and not handle the newspaper at all. You can read the whole book without touching the item at all. These are quite heavily read, and as there had to be an archival copy, this does help because it's an alternative to polyester paper? I like it really, because the artifact itself is not covered up with a polyester film, but you just have to take your choice. If it were a newspaper, for instance, if you had a pile of newspapers that you didn't want to handle this way, I think polyester would be advantageous for you.

Here's a picture [displayed] showing the phase boxing. This is how the books look on the shelf. If you saw a closeup, you would see many of the books now are in

single leaves. There are no sewn structures left at all. Actually you can see in this slide, if you look at that cartload of boxes, that basically they're all the same size. Obviously there's a variation, but it's a minor variation. You can see this is near the end of the project, because now we've arrived at the larger size. We decided on five sizes throughout the collection for the boxes. The catalogers went through the whole collection and picked out all the books no bigger than a certain size. Then they went through the next size larger, and so on. You can see the one that's lying on its side. It's not square. It's like a wedge shape, so the boxes are made wedge shaped if the bock is wedge shaped.

This is the area that the collection is housed in. As you see, now they're all put back in their cases. What was interesting about it, when we first started that program five years ago, the one problem that we thought we'd have was that we'd lose a lot of space because of the addition of three thicknesses of card per book. Well, what happened, of course, was that by shelving by size, which is another enthusiastic nudge to reshelve by size, we gained a tremendous amount of space, because, you see, the shelves are much more compact. It was an amazing additional little fillip for us. We did gain space for that particular collection.

One of the things that I've been particularly interested in is this problem of library binding. We got together with the library binding officer and his assistant, and we formed an evaluation committee to evaluate library binding. We looked through some of the work that had been done previously by the different binders for the Library of Congress. I must say, before I go on, that most of the work wasn't too bad, but it wasn't too good either. It was average. So we tried to come up with some standards which would improve the standards of library binding without the additional problem of added expense. We didn't want to say to a library binder "Well, you need to do this or you need to do that" and he'd come back and say "Oh, it's going to cost too much" and all that. Well, I've worked in library binding shops, and I know exactly what goes on, so everything that we suggested didn't mean that he'd have to make an excuse that there's additional cost.

The result was a contract that I think is in public domain, so any library could apply to LC for this contract. It goes through all the material that the library binder would have to abide by. The beginning part is the evaluation and the sample. So what happens every year now, because it has to be bid on every year--the library binding officer goes through the stacks and gets sets of books, all the same, exactly the same. Then the bid is put out to any library binder in the country. There is a stipulation that they have to have four times the business that the Library of Congress would give them within a year to be able to bid on the contract, but other than that, they can bid. So the bid goes out, and if there are interested library binders who want to bid on the contract, we send them these 10 samples, which include books to be oversewn, adhesive bound, sewn through the folds, slipcased, and a few other situations. All the books are measured prior to going out, like the back margins, the size of the book; all the bibliographical information is taken down so that they can be checked for mistakes on lettering and so forth. They then have to do these 10 samples in the way that is specified in the contract. Then they come back. They're not identified. There's only one person on the evaluation committee who knows who the binders are. They're all identified only by code number. We don't know what firm it is. We go through and evaluate each binding and each book, each box for overtrimming in the back margin, whether they followed instructions particularly, whether the standard of work that we're looking at is what we feel is a reasonable standard expected from any library binder. We have a marking system, which any of you are welcome to see, or if you write for the specs, they will tell you. The standard of marking is very high in the sense that I think it's approximately 80% that they have to achieve as a pass mark. If they do something in any one of the books that is irretrievable--for instance, if they've trimmed more than a certain amount off the back margin to help their oversewing,

or they've trimmed through printed material, or whatever--they lose their whole mark for that particular book. It becomes very difficult for that binder to pass that evaluation if he loses his total marks on one binding.

We found out some interesting things in doing this evaluation. The first year we did this I don't think the library binders seriously believed what we were doing. That first year we had the most horrendous group of books from about 8 or 10 binders. They were bad. Well, the Library Binding Institute got all upset about this situation. They had a meeting in Washington and came down and quizzed the evaluation committee--"You don't know what you're talking about," that sort of thing. But, since that time the number of binders applying for the contract has certainly been reduced, but also the standards that have been achieved now by a group of library binders bidding on the contract is phenomenal. The samples are now very difficult to evaluate, in the sense of trying to find something wrong with them--not that we do, but basically they pass with flying colors in many instances. It's only on occasion when they let something slip through the production line without checking that it makes a real problem. It really has developed a standard for library binding which I feel is very high, and I would like to try to influence you in choosing a library binder. Don't allow the library binders to tell you what to do. Tell them what you want, because there's big business out there, and they all want your business. You have a big choice to make. I think the standards could be raised in library binding without additional cost. That's a personal view; I have to say that.

I suppose you know what oversewing is, and most library binding is done by the oversewing method, which is just a horrendous method for binding books. There are alternatives that can be asked for. There is a method called Smyth cleat which is not oversewn, but it's similar, and that's not too good either. There's another form of binding which is the Ehlermann adhesive binding method, which uses no sewing. It's a purely adhesive binding, but it's different from regular adhesive binding that you were just hearing about [perfect binding]. It's a fanning method. They fan the leaves and glue either side of the leaf so it's not on the edge. It's on each side. My personal opinion--if they can't come up with a better method of doing library binding, the Ehlermann adhesive binding is most likely less damaging to your material than any other method at the moment. At least you know they don't have to trim that much off, so you know that the books can be rebound again. Once you oversew it, that's the end of your book. You can't open it, for a start, to read. If you want to have it rebound, there's no margin anyway.

So it's a difficult choice really, but we at the Library have been pushing to go through the fold--that is, have sewing through the fold. Everybody says "Oh, that's too expensive." But it is interesting to know that for the library binders who do our work, the cost per book is not that much more than oversewing. That is really remarkable to me. As a binder, I can't understand it, but it isn't very much more. Whether it's because of the number that we have bound, so our contract is attractive to the library binder, I'm not certain. But I think in 1974 or 1975, the percentage of the contract on sewing through the fold was about 15% of the contract, and now we've gone up to 35%. There are machines that will do it. These library binders--if they tell you they've got no machines--there certainly are machines on the market. They just whip them through and--you know, they're all odd sizes, different signatures, different sizes in length, and it seems that it's just set by one machine, and it's a very quick method. So it's a point to try to encourage sewing through the fold. Of course, if the books that are going to be produced in the future don't have any folds, you may have to go to the Ehlermann style of binding anyway.

You know, we were talking about environment and the problems of light and so on? Here's a picture [displayed] of a fluorescent tube with a UF ultraviolet sleeve put on it to try to cut down the damage done by light. All your fluorescent tubes ought to have UFUV sleeves on, which is no big deal.

This is a monitor [photograph displayed] to monitor temperature and humidity. It's an expense, but not too expensive to put one of these in different areas that you feel should have some control. It gives you a basis for arguing for some money to improve the conditions of the stack areas.

Question
What is the optimum temperature?

Mr. Etherington
Well, I can give you figures, but it doesn't mean too much if you can't get it. The temperature for the stack areas ought to be no more than 68° or 65° F. If you maintain 60°-68° in the stacks, you're doing well. Maybe in the areas where the people are working you can get it up to 70° or 72°, but many in the United States think that's pretty chilly. The humidity shouldn't be much more than 50%--plus or minus 3 or 4 or 5%. I've given you these things, but what does it mean? In most buildings that are already established, most of you must know that it's practically impossible to get any money out of the administration to put new systems in. It's only in the new buildings that you can really fight to get optimum conditions.

In a large library like the Library of Congress (and I'm certain that you have the same problem) exhibitions of materials cause us a tremendous amount of added work. We try to answer all the exhibit's needs. Here you see what we call a card cradle [photograph displayed], which is a poor man's Plexiglas cradle. It's just made up of pieces of card which are shaped and cut to form the opening of the book. Now that book doesn't look very well opened, but that's the only angle at which that book could reasonably be opened without its cracking and breaking up. That's a simple thing that a group within the library could do very simply. We have all the instructions for making all these things. You can just write to us, and we'll send you the workshop note on how to make that card cradle.

Here you see a Plexiglas cradle, which is a sophisticated version of the card cradle, of course. That does take a little bit of skill to make, but if you have an exhibits area in your environment, you know, you might have someone who could do those. They are rather expensive to make. They take approximately six hours to make. But for very valuable material they certainly look splendid. They do much to enhance the exhibit. It's a very light and airy exhibition when you see a beautifully illuminated manuscript or book on those cradles.

This is showing you the Gutenberg display case that is environmentally controlled [photograph displayed]. We have a real problem at the Library, because we don't have any controlled conditions. We don't have any exhibition areas in the Library that are controlled. The Gutenberg, for instance, is in the main hall, accessible by two double doors. There is no way of controlling the conditions in this hall, so the case itself has been fighting to keep the space environmentally controlled within where the book is. It's quite a problem, because any unit that has to fight the outside environment is just really fighting a losing battle.

This is a rare book box [photograph displayed]. In this particular instance, because this is the Kelmscott *Chaucer*, it's a fairly big book, you see in the fore-edge there is a little flap. Well, you pull that flap, and it pulls a tray which gets the book out of the box easily for you. Now that's not a normal rare book box. That's just an adaptation of our standard rare book box.

Are there any questions?

Question
The cardboard that you use--is that special too?

Mr. Etherington
Yes, Hollinger Company produces an acid-free board. It's better now--they've lined

it with a white paper and it's much nicer looking. They have a catalog you can write for. We do have workshop notes that will help you make any of these things. You can just write the Preservation Office, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

Question
Is there any kind of preparation for preserving leather bindings?

Mr. Etherington
Well, that's a little bit tricky to answer at the moment. I didn't mention it, you noticed, when I was discussing housecleaning or in-house preservation. The only reason I didn't mention it is that I'm not certain whether oiling does any good or not. There's being some work done at the Library at the moment on leather dressing. There are two or three dressings available on the market, including our LC one. We're not very happy with it in a working situation. It's very fluid, and it's very easy to run in through the worn area of leather and go right into the book. We were rather unhappy, and we wanted the lab to come up with some alternatives to the preparations that are currently available. They've just started a project. The first part has already been done. They've evaluated five or six known dressings--the ones used in England, various other ones that have been in the literature, our own at LC--and truly, the ones that have been all thought to be most usable, we've found they're not very good. Even our own has had the formula changed. We've reduced the proportions and added some beeswax, so it's now a much more solid type of preparation, and it's much better feeling to work with.

We wanted to do an oiling project at the Library, so we asked if we could get some people from the collection and maintenance crew to go through and do an oiling program. That's what instigated the question of whether we could allow unskilled people to go into the stacks oiling large numbers of leather bindings. One of the questions is, can they recognize a leather binding? Now, that may seem strange, but you go into a stack now, and choose what you think is leather. Then also choose what is not leather, then decide whether or not this preparation that you've got in your hand can be safely used on that particular type of leather.

So here you go into the stacks with this horrible question on your mind--is this the oil? Is this the dressing? Is this leather? Is it cloth? On a mass program it can get very tricky. So we're evaluating whether we can come up with (A) a dressing that would be suitable or could be used on most forms of leather. Remember there's calf, which reacts differently from goatskin; you don't want to do alum tawed pigskin; you don't want to do vellum; you don't want to do paper bindings. Do you do a leather binding that is next to a paper binding, so that it transfers at a later stage, the oil from the leather to the paper binding? Or do you want it to stick to the shelf if you've got a leather binding next to the shelf support? Do you have to pull it away because it's stuck? There's a bundle of questions here.

I've seen an example in the Library from a woman who summers in Maine. She had a library there. Each summer she oiled her books as a part of the stay in Maine. I saw the books the other day in Washington, at least some of them, and they are in pristine condition. Which argues that you should oil your bindings--right? None of them has deteriorated, you see, so what most likely has happened is that this woman had looked after her books as had her family before her. This was a ritual. The family had regularly oiled the bindings before they deteriorated, and they really are superb. But, you see, deteriorated leather is not going to be saved by leather dressing. Not only that, where it is deteriorated and you oil over, you'll most likely do damage to the material inside. So you can see there are questions relating to leather dressings that are really difficult to answer. If you knew that the bindings had not deteriorated, if you knew it was leather, if you knew the dressing you had would be safe for that particular type of leather, then most likely a leather dressing program is very good.

We tested ourselves out actually. One of the conservators who was working on this program went into the stacks just around the corner from the Perservation Office, brought 30 or 40 books out and tested us to see if we could determine which books were leather and which were cloth. Well, there were two or three out of that 30 that I didn't know, or I hesitated to state whether it was leather or not. Now, I think that shows that it's not too easy to determine exactly what's what. Certainly now with the new materials--the vinyl that looks like the Naugahyde--the materials being bound on books can be very cleverly designed so you don't know whether it's leather or not. If you start oiling that... We found that if you oil something that won't absorb the oil to a certain degree, it seems to slide around the material and wick into the book. One of our conservators oiled a book that had been coated with PVA, so it was shiny. Well, what happened was, the PVA just could not be penetrated, so the oil slipped around and took the nearest point where it could be wicked up, and it wicked all throughout the book. Now the book's being restored at a tremendous cost. So there are really serious problems in doing a mass program of oiling. I would only suggest that if you can evaluate the materials to be oiled, if you know that you're on safe ground, then most likely an oiling program of some sort is worthwhile. I hope the program at LC will carry on and we'll come up with some answers for you.

Question
Would shelving our new cheap books by size help preserve them too, just like the old ones? What's the advantage to that?

Mr. Etherington
Well, many of the books you see that are deteriorating on the library shelves are the ones that are not supported, in many instances. That means the top half of the book is not supported, because it's got a smaller book next to it. It's expanding and contracting in a changing environment, and it's just splitting at the head and bending around the other books, and there's a tremendous amount of damage done by shelving just in the regular manner. I know it's sort of a fatuous suggestion, but speaking as a conservator, if it were possible to reshelve by size, we would certainly encourage that where possible.

Comment from audience
Mr. Etherington, I just want to comment that this is advice that we can all give to our library patrons.

Mr. Etherington
That's true.

Question
The lady from Maine--what oil did she use?

Mr. Etherington
I'm not exactly certain, but it may be that it was similar to what you can buy from Talas in New York, or even the LC recipe would most likely be alright for that particular collection that doesn't seem to have any damage. I was impressed by it, I must admit, because it did show that a program of oiling continuously seemed to be successful.

Question
Do we know how long microfilm will last?

Mr. Etherington
Well, I'm not an expert on microfilm, so I can only say that certainly some of the early microfilm, and you most likely all know this, has deteriorated and is deteriorating.

There's a program, of course, to remicrofilm the microfilm. The film that they have now, I gather, is as permanent as they can possibly make it. But there are many problems, I think, with microfilm. I think one of the problems that I've found is that many people don't like using microfilm. They want to keep the originality factor.

I mentioned deacidification. There are various methods of deacidification that can be used. There's a commercial product on the market that was designed by Richard Smith, and it comes in a spray bottle. You can, in fact, spray material, but it's relatively expensive in the sense that you can only do a small amount of documents with one bottle.

We developed a similar material at the Library of Congress called methomagnesium carbonate. It's a similar material, which can be brushed on, but you need to work in a fume hood. So again, as an in-house project, you really can't do it unless you have a fume hood. It does save going through the process of having to wash the item. You can just brush this methomagnesium carbonate on. It's a nonaqueous treatment, and it does dry by evaporation.

The other treatment, the one we use at the Library the most, is the aqueous. That is, magnesium bicarbonate. That means that you do have to do a wet treatment, and it gets really tricky to suggest personnel in the library to do that.

The answer to all our dreams maybe is in vapor phase deacidification where thousands of books can be shipped all at once and put in a chamber to be deacidified. The Research and Testing Office has taken a patent out on diethyl zinc, and it does seem to work within pretty good parameters. For instance, flat materials--maps and drawings that were put in the chamber--were deacidified and relatively stable. Book material has also been done with success. There is some slight distortion of the book block, but not a tremendous amount. So we're all hoping that the process of diethyl zinc and mass deacidification is going to be with us. The cost factor has to be worked out and that's going to be an interesting figure. If it's valid and if it's within reason, it's going to be super. But, of course, deacidification does not strengthen paper. It only chemically changes it from an acid paper to a neutral paper. It doesn't add strength to the material. If we can add strength to it, we've got it made.

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BINDING, FINE AND OTHERWISE

Susan Spring Wilson

I assume that you've learned from the other speakers about the various forms of trade binding of the books librarians are commonly dealing with today. The purpose of my talk is to link together the threads of today's trade practices with the longer and larger tradition of hand bookbinding. Then we'll close with a discussion of a specialized form of hand bookbinding, modern fine binding, which is the art form of bookbinding in a way that modern hand weaving is the art form of textiles.

All the trade practices are offshoots of the mechanization of hand bookbinding. A hand bookbinder can produce any of the various styles of binding, including the perfect binding, which is like a pad of scratch paper with a cover of boards or paper. But the main province of the hand bookbinder is working with the codex form, which means sheets of paper folded and interleaved into sections or signatures and then sewn together. A hand binder often does produce a limited edition of hand sewn, case bound books, but the critical factor is that hand bookbinding is labor intensive and not geared to mass production. In fact, when I worked with the Arion Press, a small press here in San Francisco, we often found it more financially advantageous to ship books out to be machine sewn and then bring them back into the bindery for the case making and the casing of the books to the covers. It is in the area of limited editions where the traditions and methods of trade and hand bookbinding often merge. It is incongruous to hand set type, to use good quality paper, and then put the book into a perfect binding that may very well fall apart and cannot easily be rebound.

It is obvious by now that the key to hand binding is the sewing of the book. It is the sewing that holds the book together. Any adhesive in a hand bound book just consolidates that sewing and helps the back of the book maintain its rounded shape or regain that shape after use. There are several styles of sewing books which I'm just going to outline briefly.

The styles of sewing were developed historically and handed down to the present day binder so that when rebinding a book he can choose a style that is best suited to the individual book. In choosing the most suitable style, the binder considers the age of the book, the weight of the paper, the format of the book, and the use that book will be put to, the sorts of things that Donald Etherington was talking about in saving the archival copies of books. Because books are intended to be used, they must open well and allow a good flow of pages for reading. Many modern books are not made in a format or with a paper that will readily allow them to be rebound with an older method of sewing.

Sewing on double or single raised cords are two of the oldest sewing styles. Double raised cords are usually associated with heavy, large, lectern type books with the heavy double cords adding strength and rigidity to the spine. Through research done after the Florence flood, it has been discovered that limp vellum books, which are normally sewn on three double raised cords, were very flexible, and with the added flexibility of their soft, pliable, vellum covers, they were less liable to damage than books with rigid structures.

With the advent and flourishing of the printing press and increased literacy, books became common and smaller in size. Five single raised cords on the spine of the book became the common form of binding or sewing. This form of binding has been standard for centuries, although with heavier paper, and is the sort of thing we're used to today. Five raised cords make the spine of the book more rigid. Many books don't open more than 90° with this type of sewing. The openability of the book is something that has changed over time. Our current preference, especially a librarian's preference for books that open a full 180°, is a relatively new one.

Over time, mechanization and the results of the Industrial Revolution reached bookbinding, and the standard of the average binding deteriorated. For example, the bookbinders discovered that rather than using the rather tedious method of sewing on raised cords, saw cuts could be made on the spine, then sewing was easier through the cuts on sunken cords. Another example of this is that thin calfskins and sheepskins were used to cover books. Sheepskin, by its very nature, tends to split away into two layers. It's not a very durable or permanent material for bookbinding.

Even a century ago librarians were faced with books falling apart, most commonly with the boards coming away from the text block, just falling off. This was partly due to poor quality leather being used, also due to another of the bookbinder's short-cuts of not lacing all five cords into the board. Just lacing in two or three of these cords weakens the structure so that the board tends to pull away more easily. Or in use, you'd wear off two more easily than five.

Because of this situation and the resultant criticism, a new form of binding was developed. This type of binding was called library style binding, because it was developed to meet the needs of libraries of the time. It doesn't mean the same sort of thing we mean when we talk about library binding. It was a different style of leather binding. Library binding is sewn on flat linen tapes rather than cords. The board is set away from the shoulder of the book leaving a groove between the board and the shoulder. Having that groove makes it unnecessary to thin the leather down over the joint as much as it is necessary to thin it down when you're putting it over the cords. Although there are variations on the methods of sewing, they are basically sewing on tapes or on cords, and the cords can be double raised cords, single raised cords, or cords that are sunk into the spine of the book.

Once the handbound book is sewn, it is then rounded and backed to form the shoulder that the boards will fit into, and the boards are attached. Although it is a little naked, at this point the book begins to look like a book. Once the boards are attached, they form an integral part of the book. It's not like a case binding that has the text block separate from the book. The boards are part of the book. They're laced onto the cords, and the cords are attached to the sewing, so it all becomes one unit.

Fine binding is also called extra binding, because in the process of binding, extra steps are taken to add to the durability and strength of the book, and to its appearance as a finished product as well. There are more than 50 steps in the making of a fine binding. I can't bore you by taking you through all the steps, which in a fine binding can take more than 100 hours or more to complete.

One of the steps included is headbanding, and I'd like to mention that, because it may have something to do with things librarians have noticed. In pulling a book off the shelf, often a librarian or patron will hook his finger in and pull it off by the cap instead of properly grasping the book by the sides. The headband is there to reinforce and strengthen that cap. It's sewn into the spine of a book and attached to the spine or to the actual sewing of the book and helps form a rigid structure that is a part of the book, linked with the sewing.

Another stage in fine binding that I'd like to mention is gilding or coloring of edges. Gilding helps make the edges more resistant to dust which might otherwise work its way into the book.

Then, of course, in fine binding there are numerous forms of decoration, and I think the best thing to do is to leave that until we look at the slides, and I can discuss some of those things. [Remainder of commentary directed to slide presentation.]

Ed. note: Following Ms. Wilson's address, workshop participants moved to the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art to view the exhibition "Hand Bookbinding Today: an International Art." A catalog of the exhibit is available from the museum bookstore. Order from: Museum Bookstore, San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, Van Ness at McAllister, San Francisco, CA 94102. $10.00 each copy; $1.25 postage. Calif. residents add sales tax.